Please amend the present application as follows:

Claims

The following is a copy of Applicants' claims that identifies language being added with underlining ("___") and language being deleted with strikethrough ("~~———~~"), as is applicable:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus comprising:

a receiver for receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:

(i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved, and

(ii) one or more values that define

(a) a first time interval during which a second shared-communications channel is reserved, and

(b) a second time interval during which a first signal is transmitted

over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel, wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval; and

a transmitter for transmitting, within said first time interval, a second signal over said first shared-communications channel ~~only~~.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein

said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said transmitter is also for transmitting, after said second time interval, a third signal over the combination of a plurality of shared-communications channels.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to transmitting said third signal, transmitting sequentially over each of said plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to receiving said first message:

transmitting over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and

transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said receiver is also for receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a processor for:

sending signals to said transmitter, receiving signals from said receiver, and

executing a contention-based protocol prior to said transmitter transmitting said second signal over said first shared-communications channel.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a data message.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

13. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

(a) receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:

(i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved,

(ii) a first time interval associated with subsequent reserving of a second shared-communications channel, and

(iii) a second time interval associated with transmitting a first signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel, wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval; and

(b) transmitting, within said first time interval, a second signal over said first shared-communications channel ~~only~~.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

(c) transmitting, after said second time interval, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and

(d) transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

16. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

transmitting, prior to receiving said first message, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that shared-communications channel; and

transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

17. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

(c) receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

(c) executing, after (a) and prior to (b), a contention-based protocol to gain access to said first shared-communications channel.

19. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:

(c) transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

(d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

20. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:

(c) transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and

(d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.